didates recommended by the government—a practice that became common later under the Kremlin regime.

The S-D party decided to present its official candidates in the workers' elections and to abstain from campaigning among the peasants. It had no clear policy for urban elections and vacillated between the policy of party lists and a coalition with other parties. In St. Petersburg, the Cadets tried to unite all progressive groups. The Laborites and the S-R were ready to enter into a coalition with them if the S-D participated in the plan. The Mensheviks were willing to accept this policy, but the Bolsheviks insisted on a pure party ticket. Amidst the party squabble, I offered a new plan—a coalition of the S-D with the S-R and the Laborites against the Cadets and the rightists. This plan became popular with rank-and-file party members, but met with vehement opposition in the St. Petersburg Committee. Thus, my proposal resulted in the three-corner split in the organization.

Lenin followed the dispute with great interest but did not commit himself. I suspected that he was on the side of the "pure ticket," but when I asked him, he answered with his usual sly smile, "I do not know. . . . It depends. . . ." At the party conference, held in Finland, he threw all his influence in support of the policy of the pure lists, but after a violent clash between the two factions he changed his tactics and recommended the "left bloc" strategy as the best way to isolate the Menshevist faction and annihilate it politically. The rump conference, without the Mensheviks, accepted this plan and I was asked to negotiate with our prospective allies. After the meeting Lenin said to me, "Your plan has saved the day. It is good to have something to fall back on when the need arises."

Our prospective allies accepted all our proposals—a left bloc was their old dream. We met a serious difficulty, however. The law provided for secret balloting in the first stage of the election in urban areas, but the government declared that no pre-printed ballots would be counted unless the blanks had been stamped by the local municipal authorities. It ordered the latter to issue no blanks to parties not registered by the police. As a result of these interpretations, no party left of the Cadets could obtain the blanks.

When we discussed the situation with other leftist parties, a spokesman of the Labor Group proposed a plan. A group of priests with liberal leanings would form an alliance of Christian Love (or something of the kind) and announce its intention of entering the election in St. Petersburg. After obtaining stamped blanks from the Municipal Council, the group would enter into a coalition with the Laborites, pass the blanks on to them, and quietly dissolve. I did not